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Prophet and Loss

From his initial appearances in Rob Liefeld's ***Youngblood,*** Prophet has seemed like a hero who knows his past, his present, and his future. Imagine, then, how shocked and confused John Prophet must be to discover in the aftermath of Extreme Sacrifice that some of the things he thought he knew about himself may not be true at all... and now he finds himself remembering things that he couldn't possibly have been involved with—or could he?

Prophet's new direction is masterminded by writer Chuck Dixon, well known to comic fans for his work on such popular titles as ***Punisher*** and ***Batman.*** He is joined by fan-favorite artist Stephen Platt, who first captivated fans with his work on ***Moon Knight*** and has more recently illustrated the first ***Prophet*** series for Image and Extreme Studios.

Prophet's quest for the truth behind his past and his identity is at the core of a three-issue story arc begins in ***Prophet Volume 2 #1.*** By the time it's all over, Prophet will learn the truth about himself... but neither he nor his fans will expect the revelations that come out of this revamping of one of Image's most popular heroes.

Prophet Volume 2 #1, a $2.50 comic, is scheduled for early April release; subsequent issues will follow on an approximately bimonthly basis.

by ALEX KIRKLAND

Vampirella's Origin—Revamped

What is the origin of the sexy bloodsucker, Vampirella? Her first origin, presented over two decades ago in the pages of her Warren magazine, has been discarded, leaving her character with a mysterious, unrevealed past. That past will come to light, though, in a six-part storyline that will shock even Vampirella herself. Is she an alien, a vampire, a predator, a heroine, or none of the above? This is the question that plagues her... but the answer she discovers may be more unsettling than simply not knowing.

"The Mystery Walk," a six-part storyline written by Tom Sniegoski and illustrated by Kevin Sharpe and Cæsar, begins in ***Vengeance of Vampirella #14.*** This self-contained story arc offers new readers a great jumping-on point; not only will it explore Vampirella's past, but it will also introduce a number of new supporting characters,

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including a sensual dark-haired beauty named Magdalene with a taste for human flesh. But what is her enigmatic connection to Vampirella?... Other characters debuting in this story arc include Hunter, a beautiful, deadly warrior woman; and Elvis, a dead ringer for the King... if it weren't for the three eyes and the tentacles, that is.

Each installment of the story arc will feature a cover illustration by Chris Berkley; a very limited alternate cover edition featuring art by Buzz will also be released. Additionally, Buzz is supplying the art for all six centerspread pullout posters; the six pieces combine to form one giant Buzz poster.

Vengeance of Vampirella #14, a $2.95 comic that kicks off the "Mystery Walk" storyline, is scheduled for mid-May release; the story will continue through October of '95.

by ALEX KIRKLAND

Malibu Unholsters A Pair of Firearms

The bad news is that Firearm is going away. ***Firearm #18*** will be the last issue in James Robinson's story of Alec Swan, the detective who just can't get away from the world of the ultras—but that doesn't mean no Firearms in the Ultraverse. Quite the contrary, there's very good news in store as Malibu introduces two Firearms into the Ultraverse—and they're the same person!

When Alec Swan retires from active duty at the end of his series, The Lodge realizes that it needs a new agent to take his place. They activate a double-agent planted deep within the rival organization Aladdin, making him their new Firearm... but that creates an unusual situation when the new Firearm displays distinctly different personalities, depending on whether he's working for The Lodge or for Aladdin at the time. And these two personas lead to two very different Firearm storylines, one written by Marv Wolfman and one written by David Quinn—and both storylines are featured in the same ***Codename: Firearm*** miniseries.

"I like heroes who are set against themselves, heroes who have to fight everything they are in order to achieve some possible greater success, to rise above the status quo," Marv Wolfman said. "The dual set-up in ***Codename: Firearm*** allows that."

"***Codename: Firearm*** is a story that stands on its own," David Quinn said, "a miniseries that's designed more like a serial novel than an ongoing monthly book. So far, it's been a fascinating challenge—trust me, I've never seen a book quite like this!"

Codename: Firearm will introduce fans to both heroes in a single-six issue miniseries that will be released twice monthly; Quinn and Wolfman will co-write the first and last issues of the series and will alternate writing honors for the middle four issues. Additionally, Alec Swan/Firearm creator James Robinson and artist Arnie Jorgenson will contribute an exclusive original Firearm story to each issue, making it clear to fans that the new direction for Firearm meets with his creator's approval. "I am delighted that the Firearm name is being continued by such a creative team," Robinson said. "I am also happy with the direction that they're taking with Firearm. I think it is very fresh and will be very successful with fans."

by WAYNE LEE

Ultraverse Highlights Process of Elimination

After debuting almost a dozen heroes in its first year of operation, the Malibu Ultraverse has been a pretty stable place. That stability is about to be shaken up, though, with the addition of a part-human, part-machine superhero whose specialty is death.

The Eliminator, the hero who first appeared in ***Ultraverse Premiere #10***, is graduating into his own limited series in May following the release of a special zero issue in April. This new title by Hank Kanalz, Roland Mann, Mike Zeck,and Denis Rodier is the first addition to the Ultraverse this year—and to make sure that its debut doesn't go unnoticed, Malibu is tying the series into the Loki/Infinity Gem story arc that began in Godwheel and continues through a variety of Ultraverse titles this year.

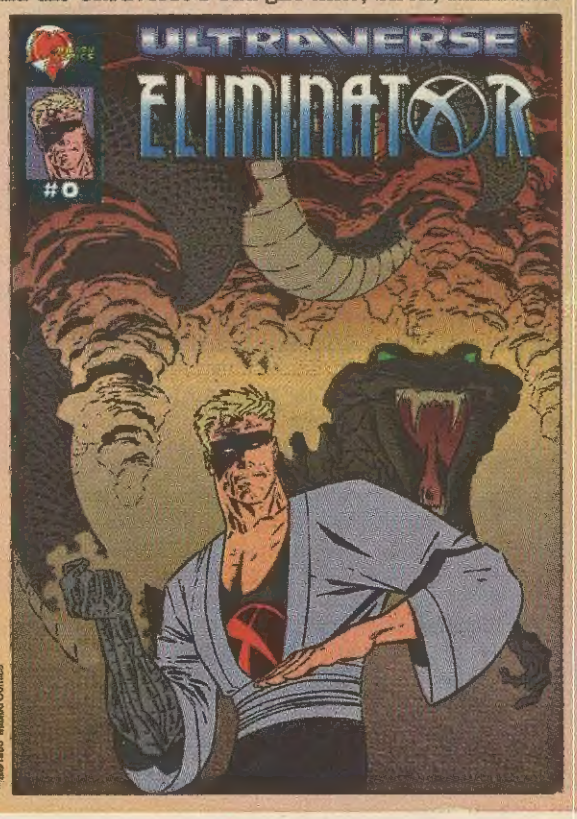
"***Eliminator*** will appeal to fans who love classic aggressive, no-holds-barred, bare-knuckle brawl characters with honor," co-writer Roland Mann said. "But ***Eliminator*** never forgets that it has to entertain readers with a riveting story."

"Eliminator is a cybernetic mercenary who trains the killers of tomorrow," co-writer Hank Kanalz said. "Trapped in a killing game between his arch-enemy, Mannequin, and the Ultraverse's bad girl thief, Siren, Eliminator will discover to his horror that he is more machine than man!"

Eliminator marks acclaimed artist Mike Zeck's return to regular series comics after far too long an absence (he also recently illustrated a two-issue story arc for ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight***). "Eliminator is a man without a past, a man without a family, and a man who doesn't know why his right arm is a machine," Zeck said. "Despite that, he's been able to build a life and a business for himself and as his past catched up to him, the adventure begins and we get to go along for a ride."

Eliminator #1, a $2.50 comic, is scheduled for May release.

by WAYNE LEE



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COMIC SHOP NEWS™
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Mantra Stars In Low-Key Adventure No, Make that Loki Adventure!

Loki continues to menace the Ultraverse this summer... and in June, it's Mantra who has to deal with Loki and his minion, Primevil. Loki is looking for the Mind Gem, the second of the Infinity Gems catapulted into the Ultraverse. He sends Primevil to find and recover the gem, but that assignment becomes a bit more difficult when Mantra interferes. The result isn't exactly a battle to the death, though... because Primevil soon finds himself infatuated with Mantra in a tale that Malibu describes as "the strangest love story the Ultraverse has ever seen!" Is this the beginning of a wonderful relationship? Not likely, if you know Mantra! ***Mantra #22,*** written by *Mike W. Barr* and illustrated by *Dave Roberts*, is scheduled for mid-June release.

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A Love/Hate Relationship

It must be difficult to be a superhero. Not only do you have to save the world from one menace after another, but you also have to face off against those lovely super-villainesses in those tight, clingy costumes... For a teenage superhero like Impulse that can create some major attention problems as his hormones go to war with his sense of justice. The cause of his confusion? A lovely "bad girl" villain known as White LIghtning, a superpowered femme fatale who moves into Manchester to take charge of the city's crime syndicate... and who ends up becoming the object of a love-hate relationship with Impulse, who has to overcome his own infatuation before he can put an end to her crime spree. White Lightning makes her debut appearance in ***Impulse #4***, a May 25th release written by *Mark Waid* and illustrated by *Hector Ramos*.

CSNsider

Marvel has announced that *Matt Groening* will oversee the creation of a new imprint, Zongo Comics, that will focus on cutting-edge alternative comics... Alas, ***WildCATs*** has not been renewed for a second season from CBS... There's good news on the Image animation front, though: WildStorm is working on a ***Gen13*** direct-to-video release that won't have to be toned down to meet network requirements... Marvel has several $1 comics in the works; these titles will feature high-profile Marvel characters in self-contained stories targeted for new readers as well as established fans... Mongolia has issued a series of X-Men postage stamps featuring Bishop, Beast, Rogue, Gambit, Cyclops, Storm, Professor X, and Wolverine; Comic Images is offering a collectors' set of all eight stamps this summer... *John Statema* takes over as artist on Prime beginning with ***Prime #24***... Those Batman fans who have been missing Alfred will be pleased to hear that he's returning this summer... A well-placed insider reports that Fox has already dropped plans for a ***Dr. Who*** series; instead, they're looking very seriously at an ***X-Files*** spin-off... Bad news: Image Comics' ***Freak Force,*** praised by many readers (and a favorite of the ***CSN*** crew) for its mixture of adventure and wit, is coming to an end with the eighteenth issue; poor sales are to blame... Ooops! A couple of weeks back, we reported that the new Dark Horse series ***Agents of Law*** was being written by *Keith Giffen;* we weren't quite right on that. While Keith is plotting the book, the scripting honors are being done by *Lovern Kindzierski*... Advance response has been so strong to the ***Rune/Silver Surfer Flip Book*** that orders exceed the print run of both ***Rune*** and ***Silver Surfer***—and they're almost as high as the total printings of both titles combined!... Marvel is relaunching its PVC figure program in June in conjunction with Comic Images; current plans call for Marvel, Comic Images, and Applause (manufacturers of the figures) to offer four PVC figures each quarter, featuring two titles from the X-Titles and two from the Marvel Universe, beginning with Storm, Gambit, Iron Man, and Spider-Man.

Getting to the Core of the Matter

Long before Kazar and the Hidden Land were ever introduced into the Marvel Universe, Edgar Rice Burroughs had introduced his own land at the center of the Earth: Pellucidar, a world within our own, a primevil forest populated with long-extinct creatures and barbaric humans. Tarzan has ventured into that world-within-a-world before... but this summer, he's going back in again to combat a mysterious hunter who is killing Pellucidar's greatest warriors and strongest creatures. Among this mystery hunter's supposed victims: David Innes, friend of Tarzan and ruler of Pellucidar, who has gone missing. And while Tarzan and the inhabitants of Pellucidar are unaware of just what a menace Tarzan will soon have to face, film and Dark Horse Comics fans know what's in store in ***Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan Vs. Predator At the Earth's Core.***

This four-issue series written by *Walt Simonson* and illustrated by *Lee Weeks* pits Tarzan, the Lord of the Jungle, against a deadly menace the likes of which he's never seen before: a Predator, searching for the ultimate prey in the land of eternal noonday sun. The four-issue series is scheduled for every six weeks release through the summer and fall. ***Edgar Rice Burroughs' Tarzan Vs. Predator at the Earth's Core #1***, a $2.50 comic, is scheduled for July 7th release.

A Wing and a Prayer

The origin of one of Batman's most frightening and bestial foes is featured in ***Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight Annual #5***, which is part of DC's series of Year One Annuals. This 64-page annual by *Chuck Dixon* and *Quique Alcatena* retells the saga of Kirk Langstrom's transformation into a half-man, half-bat creature as a result of experimentation with animal DNA. Langstrom's goal is simple: to cure his own hearing loss. What he soon discovers, though, is that not only has his hearing been sharpened to bat-like sensitivity, but his humanity is being replaced, both physically and mentally, by his bestial side. It's up to Batman to save Langstrom's humanity before it's too late. This annual, which serves as a great lead-in to the upcoming Elseworlds ***Man-Bat*** project by *Jamie Delano* and *John Bolton*, is scheduled for May 4th release.

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Tekno Hopes Fans Demand Justice

Justice is often very difficult to come by in today's society—but Tekno Comix is making it very easy for fans to find Justice this spring... Lady Justice, that is. ***Lady Justice*** is the latest Tekno title based on a concept by acclaimed fantasist and ***Sandman*** creator *Neil Gaiman*. In this series written by *C.J. Henderson* and illustrated by *Michael Netzer* and *Rick Magyar*, Lady Justice takes the form of a blind, golden-haired woman in black draped with chains and carrying the weighty, potentially dangerous scales of justice in her hand. She has the ability to possess the minds and bodies of women of all walks of life, using them to bring justice to unjust situations. Neil Gaiman describes her as "a force that possesses only one woman at a time, enabling the mortal woman's attributes to sharpen to levels of performance not naturally possible. In the first issue, Lady Justice appears to Janine Farell, who loses one brother in surgery when a gang of thieves empty the city's blood banks—and then loses another brother, a policeman, as he attempts to stop the theft. The first issue will appear in two variant editions: one featuring a cover by Bill Sienkiewicz and the other featuring a cover by Dan Brereton. The $1.95 ***Lady Justice #1*** is scheduled for mid-May release.

Merchandising: The Animated Adventure

The world of animation and the world of action figures seem to be inexorably linked—and that link forms the basis of *Kurt Busiek*'s story in ***Elvira, Mistress of the Dark #26.*** This issue casts Elvira as the voice of a Catwoman-style villainess on the popular **Flederman: The Re-Animated Series** (gee, I wonder what popular flying-mammal-inspired animated hero's series might serve as the inspiration here?...). The situation gets a bit wacky, though, when the animated villains leap off the screen to attack the show for their share of the profits. The appropriately-named "Lights, Camera... Action Figures!", which is illustrated by *Neil Vokes* and *Louis LaChance*, is the first full-length adventure in Elvira's comic book history; look for it on June 15th.

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Life Among the Ruins

For many years, ***What If?*** has offered readers intriguing glimpses into alternate possibilities for the Marvel Universe. Then, a couple of years ago, *Peter David* and *George Perez* expanded the possibilities of alternate Marvel Universes with ***The Incredible Hulk: Future Imperfect,*** a compelling tale set in a post-apocalyptic Marvel Universe in which the Hulk had become a remorseless, brutal tyrant. The success of this project proved that there was a strong market for upscale alternate-universe storylines that could capture reader interest in the same way that ***What If?*** and DC's Elseworlds has done... and in a roundabout way, was ***Ruins*** born.

Ruins, a two-issue limited series written by *Warren Ellis* and illustrated by *Cliff & Terese Neilsen,* is described by Marvel as "a cross between ***Marvels*** and 'The Age of Apocalypse.'" The series stars Phil Sheldon, the photographer who was the core character in Kurt Busiek and Alex Ross's ***Marvels***—but the Marvel Universe in which he lives is quite different than the world depicted in that earlier series. In ***Ruins,*** Sheldon is convinced that the world of heroes went wrong... and he sets out on an odyssey to prove it. Along the way, he encounters Rick Jones, a junkie who tells him the tragic story of the tumor-infested Bruce Banner, who was once exposed to gamma radiation; ex-astronaut Ben Grimm, who will always regret allowing Victor Von Doom to pilot a deadly test flight; the enigmatic President X, who has reportedly been seen on the grounds of the Westchester White House with an angelic winged figure; and the tragic Peter Parker, who unknowingly poisoned the staff of the Daily Bugle with a radioactive virus he contracted from a spider bite.

Each 32-page issue of ***Ruins*** will be presented in the Marvels format: high-quality paper and upscale color separations to do justice to the lavish painted artwork, all contained within an acetate overlay outer cover. ***Ruins #1,*** a $4.95 comic, is scheduled for June 22nd release.

In the same month, Marvel is revamping its core "Marvel Alterniverse" title, ***What If?***, complete with a new logo, a new trade dress, and painted covers. The first revamped issue, ***What If? #76,*** pits bookworm Peter Parker against sociopath Flash Thompson, who has gained amazing powers after being bitten by a radioactive spider. This storyline is written by *Terry Austin* and illustrated by *Stuart Immonen; Chris Moeller* provides the painted cover. Look for this $1.50 comic on June 29th.

Art For Art's Sake

Arthur Suydam, an acclaimed artist whose work runs the gamut from superheroes to fantasy to science fiction to children's books, is entering his third decade in the field, but while many artists know and appreciate his work, he's a bit less of a household name to the many comics fans who have admired his cover work without knowing the talented artist responsible. That oversight will be corrected in May, though, with the release of ***Visions: The Art of Arthur Suydam,*** a 128-page 12" x 12" deluxe trade paperback from Dark Horse. This lavish high-quality volume presents a visual retrospective of Suydam's career, supplemented with text by *Franz Henkle.* Both color and black and white work are featured in this deluxe edition; look for the $29.95 trade paperback on May 11th.

CSN Adds Staffer for 21st Century

We're all for long-term planning and are pleased to announce the addition of a new staffer who will be in an trainee position for several years but from whom we expect big things in the next century. William Stathis Batty was born to Maria and Ward Batty on March 22, 1995.

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Milestone Sizzles With Long Hot Summer

Places as well as people can become inextricably linked to historic events. Pearl Harbor, Gettysburg, Verdun, Waterloo... all of them are sites that have become synonymous with the deaths and destruction that occurred there. And in the Milestone Universe, Paris Island is just such a place: the site of the Big Bang, Paris Island is a place of tragedy and history, a reminder to the people of Dakota what befell a few years earlier.

Is it any wonder then, that plans to turn Paris Island into the site of a theme park create turmoil and anger among the low income residents of the area, who will be forced to abandon their homes in the area and watch helplessly as its history is plowed under? The theme park is called Utopia—but for the people who live in and near Paris Island, its construction evokes feelings far removed from utopian joy.

A plan for a theme park becomes the catalyst for ***The Long Hot Summer,*** a three-month crossover storyline that will involve every hero in the Milestone Universe. As the plan is unveiled, emotions boil over, bringing suppressed anger to the fore; soon, Dakota is racked with violence, riots ensue, innocents die, and criminals take advantage of the chaos to pursue their own aims, worsening the situation. It's up to Dakota's heroes to restore peace before even more lives are lost.

The Long Hot Summer is more than just a three-month crossover storyline; important events will be linked to this saga, including the long-awaited return of Icon to Earth; the death of Hardware's greatest enemy and the rebirth of Hardware in new armor; the disagreements within the Shadow Cabinet that lead to a rift in the group; major changes for Kobalt; and the introduction of a powerful new protagonist in the Dakota Universe. And the events of ***The Long Hot Summer*** don't become a part of history once the three-month storyline is completed;

instead, the aftermath of this summer of tragedy and turmoil will be felt in Dakota for many months to come.

The multi-part storyline is built around ***The Long Hot Summer,*** a three-issue miniseries written by Dan Chichester and illustrated by Denys Cowan and Prentis Rollins. This series— which can be enjoyed on its own but will also tie in to all seven ongoing Milestone titles in May, June, and July—will focus on the announcements of the plans to develop the Utopia theme park, and the subsequent turmoil that ensues. ***The Long Hot Summer #1,*** a $2.95 comic featuring a holographic foil-stamped cover logo, is scheduled for May 4th release; subsequent issues will be presented in unenhanced Fracote format for $2.50.

The Long Hot Summer is closely linked to two other changes in Milestone's comics: first, the books will undergo a major facelift; and second, Milestone will introduce a reader-friendly "Reader's Choice" program that will over a different 99¢ Milestone title each month.

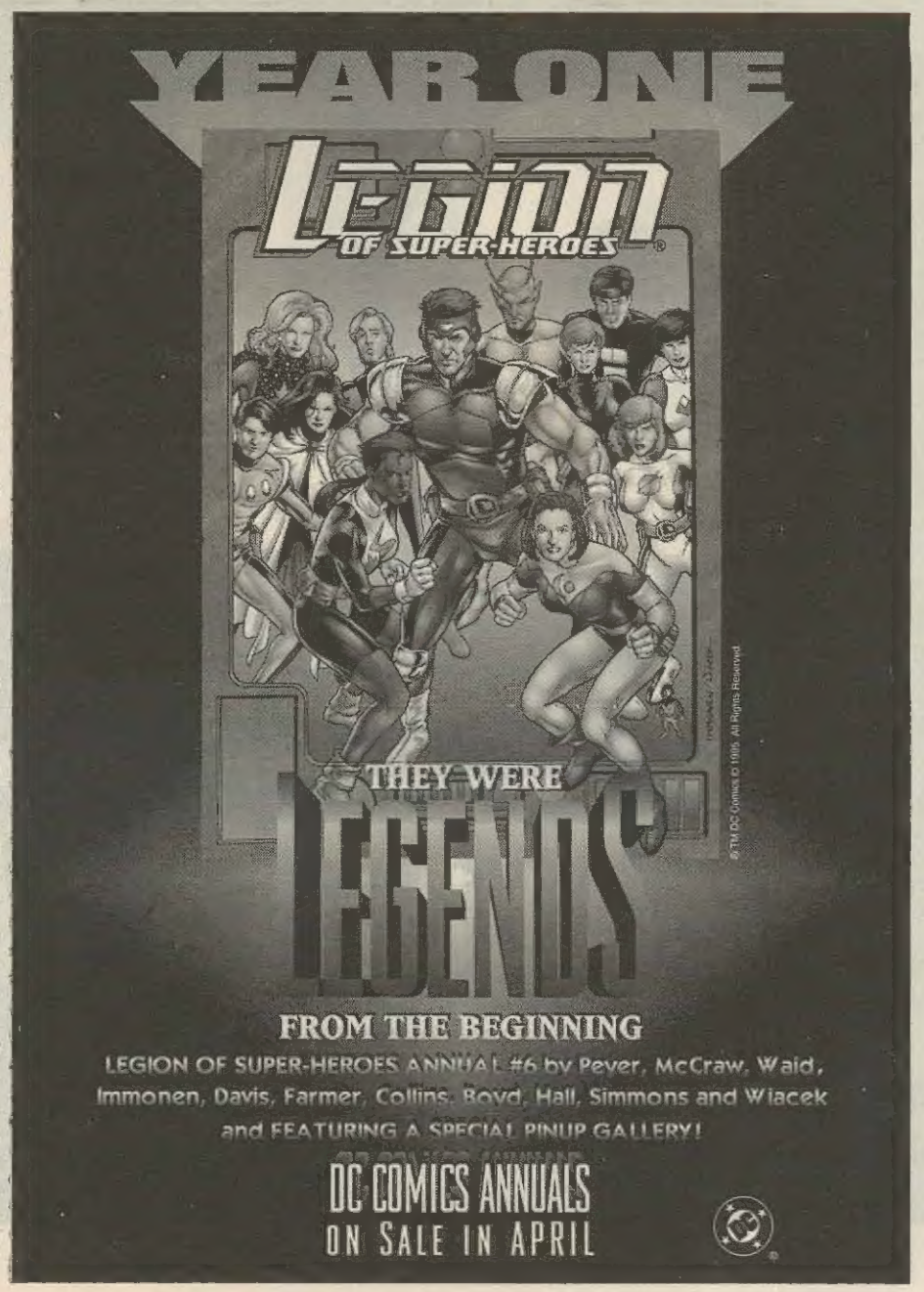
The format change will be immediately obvious: the company is upgrading all of its titles to the coated-stock Fracote format, allowing for more detailed reproduction of line art and far more subtle reproduction of the high-quality color work that has become a Milestone trademark. According to Derek Dingle of Milestone, "Sales and response for ***Deathwish*** indicated fans liked better reproduction... Readers seem to truly enjoy the enhanced color palette of Image books, and the way that we can offer that enhanced color palette is to utilize a better medium for reproducing color." With increasing newsprint costs forcing Milestone (and all other publishers) to consider price increases in the next few months, Milestone decided that upgrading the quality of the books would be a more desirable alternative to simply raising the price for the same comic format.

At the same time that escalating paper costs force changes in the Milestone line, though, the company also plans to offer a bargain-priced "Reader's Choice" program that will enable readers to enjoy a different Milestone title each month at a 99¢ entry-level price. "We're committed to this program for the rest of 1995," Dingle said. "We're going to offer full-length stories that can be enjoyed by themselves so that readers who haven't tried our books before can sample a Milestone comic book without spending a lot of money." The first "Reader's Choice" book is ***Hardware #29,*** a ***Long Hot Summer*** story that pits Hardware against the Blood Syndicate.

Milestone has other plans that will help to make their books accessible to new readers, including a series of annuals slated for launch later this year that will feature the origins and backgrounds of the Milestone heroes, enabling readers to get to know the characters and concepts behind each title. Additionally, Milestone is considering offering several trade paperbacks reprinting some of their most popular storylines so that new readers can enjoy earlier Milestone story arcs without having to hunt down more expensive back issues.

The Long Hot Summer may not be such a good thing in the Dakota Universe, but in the world of comic publishing, Milestone is hoping for a hot summer indeed—and with a high-profile story arc, enhanced formats, and a new bargain-priced entry-level program, Milestone is doing everything it can to bring the sizzle back to the summer.

by CLIFF BIGGERS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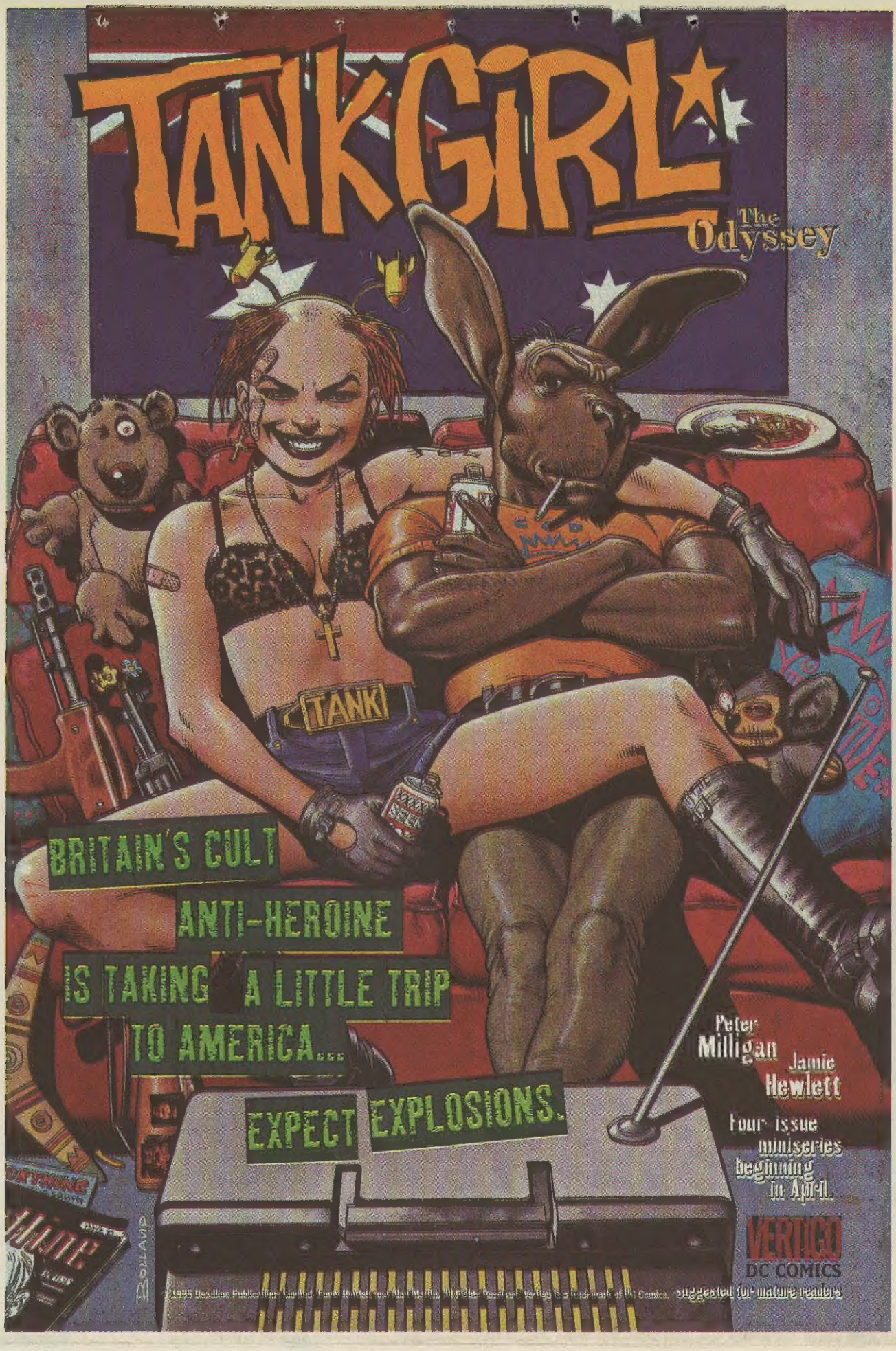

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